



BIDEFORD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held in the Town Hall, Bideford on

Thursday 19 March 2026 at 6.30 pm

PRESENT:	North Ward:	Councillor D Bushby Councillor K Hind Councillor J Gordon Councillor S Smith
	South Ward:	Councillor R Clarke Councillor S Inch Councillor P Lawrence (Chairman)
	West Ward:	Councillor C Hawkins Councillor T Inch
	East Ward:	Councillor J Gubb
IN ATTENDANCE:		J Gardner (Town Clerk) R D Coombes (Deputy Town Clerk)

124. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors J A McKenzie (East Ward – Personal) and D McGeough (North Ward – Personal).

Councillors M Taylor (West Ward), J Craige (East Ward), J and L Hellyer (East Ward) were absent but did not proffer apologies nor reasons for absence.

125. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were no declarations of interest.

126. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**

There were no public members present.

127. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 January 2026 were approved and adopted.

(Vote – For: 7, Against: 0, Abstention: 3)

128. **ACCOUNTS**

To approve the payments listed.

It was proposed by Councillor S Inch, seconded and

RESOLVED: That the List of Payments be approved.

(Vote – For: 9, Against: 0, Abstention: 1)

CHANGE OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

Agenda Item 6, Devon County Councillor report, was deferred allowing for the late arrival of Councillor Julian.

129. **COMMUNICATION BROUGHT FORWARD ON THE DIRECTION OF THE MAYOR**

The Town Clerk suggested the withdrawal of the female gender title reference and marital status recorded in the minutes, questioning the Council's protocol indicating that the continued use was an anachronism and not relevant to Council business.

Following discussion it was agreed to refer to all councillors in the same manner.

The Mayor took the opportunity to thank Members, before the Annual Town Council Meeting, for their collective support and patience during his tenure. He also thanked the Deputy Town Clerk for covering the Town Clerk role during this period.

Councillor T Inch countered, leading thanks, on behalf of his fellow councillors, to the Chairman for his leadership and representation during what had been a challenging period for the Council.

130. **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

(Councillor R Julian joined the Meeting.)

a. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 January 2026 were approved and adopted.

(Vote – For: 9, Against: 0, Abstention: 1)

b. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 February 2026 were approved and adopted.

(Vote – For: 9, Against: 0, Abstention: 1)

c. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 March 2026 were deferred until Meeting to be held on 7 May 2026.

131. **BIDEFORD WEST AND HARTLAND DEVON COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

(Councillor T Inch left and returned during the Item.)

a. The Chairman welcomed Councillor Robin Julian and invited him to address the Meeting.

- b. Councillor Julian thanked the Chairman and proceeded to give his report. Points included:
- County Councillor for Bideford East absence.
 - Clovelly Road changes / improvements.
 - Infrastructure build / flooding / drainage issues en route to Abbotsham.
 - Talks to address sewerage provision in the light of new developments.
- c. The Chairman led Members in questioning the County Councillor with points including:
- Clovelly Road footpaths / pavement need for improved access / extensions of paths.
 - Poor state of roads more keenly felt by motorcyclists.
 - Delineated cycle ways – better provision would encourage more use.
 - Request to County Councillor to inform both District and Council Ward Members of road works details.
 - Further request for the County Councillor to “fight the corner,” for those Event organisers, who will incur additional costs given the impact of road closures and their detours, not least Clovelly Road / Torridge Hill, on Town centric Events, including Carnival.
 - Inadequate enforcement / policing of Mill Street pedestrian only access during 10.00 am – 4.00 pm.
 - Offer by Councillor Bushby to arrange erection / withdrawal of DCC “A” boards emphasising the restricted vehicular access.
 - Councillor Julian referenced Foster Care and reiterated the need to improve transport connectivity, for the benefit of the young.
- d. The Chairman thanked Councillor Julian for his contribution.

132. **STAFFING, FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

- a. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 February 2026 were approved and adopted.
(Vote – For: 10, Against: 0)
- b. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 February 2026 were approved and adopted.
(Vote – For: 10, Against: 0)

133. **MARKET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

- a. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 February 2026 were approved and adopted.
(Vote – For: 9, Against: 0, Abstention: 1)
- b. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 February 2026 were approved and adopted.
(Vote – For: 10, Against: 0)

134. **TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING**

- The Chairman noted page numbering inconsistency; the Clerk to correct anomalies.
- a. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 February 2026 were approved and adopted.

(Vote – For: 10, Against: 0)

- b. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 March 2026 were approved and adopted.

(Vote – For: 10, Against: 0)

135. **DECARBONISATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

(Councillor Clarke left the Meeting.)

Councillors S Inch and Bushby led discussion on Agenda Item 15 providing for the Council applying for a Tree Preservation Order to cover the whole of Ford Woods whilst the Chairman of the Committee sought to downplay hurdles in the management of the Woods and promote benefit to the Area of Ancient Woodland.

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 February 2026 were approved and adopted subject to subsequent further detail providing for costs, ongoing costs and implications of a blanket TPO.

(Vote – For: 7, Against: 2)

(Councillor Clarke returned.)

136. **NOTICE OF MOTION**

Submission by Councillor Hind.

“To elect three Town Councillors to form a Working Group to consider the acquisition of Torridge District Council assets and their viability after Local Government Reform and report back to Full Council.”

Councillor Hind had viewed the Asset Register of TDC noting that the Working Group should look at the Bideford Assets, their cost, those that generate income and return to Council with a view to opening negotiations.

The Motion was seconded by the Chairman.

Councillor Bushby, Chairman of TDC, reiterated that the District Council had been advised not to enter into discussion by Central Government. (It was noted that North Devon Council had written to their Town and Parish Councils.)

It was proposed by Councillor Hind, seconded by Councillor Lawrence and

RESOLVED: The Motion was supported. Councillors Hind, T Inch, Clarke and the Mayor of the Day will form the Working Group to consider the acquisition of Torridge District Council assets and their viability after Local Government Reform and report back to Full Council.

(Vote – For: 9, Against: 0, Abstention: 1)

137. **APPOINTMENT OF BANK SIGNATORIES**

The Clerk reminded Members that, the recently adopted, Financial Regulations provides for the annual review of Bank Signatories.

The Chairman indicated that Agenda Items 14 and 15: appointment of signatories and online of approved payments by two authorised signatories should be considered together.

The Clerk explained the process going forward effective 1 April 2026 satisfying the Council's Financial Regulations 1.7, 7.1 and 7.9.

It was proposed by Councillor Lawrence, seconded by Councillor Bushby and

RESOLVED: That Councillors Lawrence, Bushby and McKenzie, subject to Councillor McKenzie confirming acceptance of the online authorisation effective 1 April 2026.

(Vote – For: 10, Against: 1)

138. **IT POLICY**

Members previously had sight of the national model IT policy provided by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

The Clerk explained to Members the implications of the national model IT policy which is required in order to meet governance requirements set out in paragraph 1.54 of the proper practices.

Compliance with this requirement would be tested under the newly included Assertion 10 of the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return) made at financial year end.

The Clerk spoke of best practise and the data protection risk inherent when personal equipment e.g. mobile 'phones, E mail addresses. are used when conducting Council business.

Whilst Members could indicate acceptance of the additional risk in relation to Council employees, it did not apply to councillors individually as they were data controllers in their own right.

It was proposed by Councillor Bushby, seconded by Councillor Lawrence and

RESOLVED: That the Council adopt the national model IT policy provided by NALC with the understanding that Council employees would continue to use personal equipment in the execution of their duties.

(Vote – For: 10, Against: 0)

The Clerk indicated that loan working procedures, including specific related products (issue of Council mobile 'phones / alarm equipment) will be presented to the S,F&GP Committee Meeting to be held on 9 April 2026.

139. **DEVON, PLYMOUTH AND TORBAY LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION (LGR)**

Members considered the submission, drafted by the Clerk, to the [government's consultation on local government reorganisation in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay](#) .

The Clerk indicated that Town and Parish Councils are expected to play a larger role in community empowerment, yet they did not form part of the formal consideration by central government or upper tier authorities. The Town and Parish sector must be included in the discussions on arrangements for future engagement, cooperation and collaboration with central government and any proposed unitary body.

It was proposed by Councillor S Inch, seconded by Councillor Clarke and

RESOLVED: That the Bideford Town Council letter, in response to the Central Government's consultation on Local Government Reorganisation in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, would be submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by 26 March 2026.

(Vote – For: 10, Against: 0)

140. **TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL – UPDATE**

Councillor Bushby confirmed that there would be an open day at the new Operational Services Centre, East-the-Water.

141. **BRIDGE TRUST**

Councillor Mrs J Gubb briefed Members on the income, expenditure, charitable donations and grants figures.

142. **BIDEFORD MARLAND SCHOOLS BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

Members considered an invitation from the Chairman of Marland School to appoint one or two Bideford Town Councillors to join the Bideford Marland Schools Board of Governors.

The Chairman invited those interested councillors to liaise with the Council office.

143. **PART II (CLOSED SESSION)**

Proposed by Councillor Gubb, seconded and

RESOLVED: To exclude members of the public and the press to progress matters of a confidential nature under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings Act) 1960 and Local Government Act 1972, ss 100 and 102.

(Vote – For: 10, Against: 0)

144. **HISTORIC ENGLAND**

Members had sight of a letter addressed to Historic England regarding the Regeneration of the Town. The Leader of the District Council had signed the document with a view to other

stakeholders, including Bideford Town Council, to endorse and cement a joint partnership approach.

Councillors Hind and Bushby led a robust examination of the opportunities, merits and benefits of engaging with TDC and alternatively, given the prospects of local government reorganisation, a singular approach.

It was proposed by Councillor Hind, seconded by Councillor Smith to address Historic England singularly as a Council still in support of protecting / regenerating the central area of Bideford.

(Vote – For: 3, Against: 3, Abstention: 4)

The Chairman exercised his right to a casting vote (against); the proposal failed.

Proposed by Councillor Bushby, seconded by Councillor S Inch and

RESOLVED: To sign a letter together with Torridge District Council, in enthusiastic pursuance of the opportunity to develop a formal partnership with Historic England as a Town, to secure direct investment and also to stimulate other interest and partners.

(Vote – For: 6, Against: 2, Abstention: 2)

The business of the meeting having been concluded the Mayor thanked the members for their attendance at the meeting, which concluded at 8.20 pm.

Signature of Town Mayor:

Date:

BIDEFORD TOWN COUNCIL - Accounts for approval at the Town Council Meeting - 19 March 2026						
	Date Entered		Allocation	VAT	NET	TOTAL
1	26/02/2026	Clarity Copiers	Copier Charges	1.93	9.67	11.60
2	2/03/2026	Focus Group	TR Depot / Townhall Broadband	20.54	102.72	123.26
3	2/03/2026	Lloyds	Service Charges	-00	8.50	8.50
4	28/02/2026	Bowdens Cleaning Services Limited	Cleaning	13.87	69.33	83.20
5	28/02/2026	Tamar Trading	Maintenance Items	6.49	32.37	38.86
6	28/02/2026	RGB	Maintenance Items	0.32	1.58	1.90
7	20/02/2026	Allstar	Fuel	39.65	198.28	237.93
8	02/03/2026	Torrige District Council	Town Ranger Depot Rates	267.67	1,338.33	1,606.00
9	02/03/2026	Market recharge	TC staff + Overhead	-	3,721.97	-3,721.97
10	02/03/2026	Torrige Trees Services	Tree work		3,040.00	3,040.00
11	02/03/2026	Mimick Signs	Bideford Town Council Sign	16.57	82.86	99.43
12	02/03/2026	Lineal	Licenses / Remote labour	54.61	273.06	327.67
13	02/03/2026	The Planning Portal	Full planning / LBC (Market)	14.17	364.83	379.00
14	02/03/2026	Amazon	Amazon Prime		8.99	8.99
15	02/03/2026	Future Garden Ltd	Round plant pot	9.66	48.29	57.95
16	02/03/2026	MDL Powerup Limited	Spare parts: chipper / bolts for blades	25.00	125.00	150.00
17	02/03/2026	Future Garden Ltd	Round plant pot	5.32	26.63	31.95
18	02/03/2026	BJ's Value House	2 Gang Pattress Box	0.29	1.46	1.75
19	02/03/2026	B&Q	Water butt	12.67	63.33	76.00
20	02/03/2026	Motor Parts Direct	Cockpit Matt / Lucas 12v	2.74	13.72	16.46
21	06/03/2026	Bideford Cobblers and Keys	Key Cutting		20.00	20.00
22	06/03/2026	Torrige District Council	Full planning / LBC (Market)	25.50	127.50	153.00
23	16/03/2026	B&M Bideford	Maintenance Item	3.26	16.33	19.59
24	16/03/2026	Mow-it	Maintenance Item	3.82	19.13	22.95
25	16/03/2026	Torrige Trees Services	Tree work		2700.00	2,700.00
26	16/03/2026	EDF	Electricity Quay Lights	11.20	223.94	235.14
27	17/03/2026	Clarity Copiers	Relocation of printer / copier	40.00	200.00	240.00
28	17/03/2026	Glendale Countryside Limited	Ford Woodland Survey	152.47	762.35	914.82
29	17/03/2026	Peninsula Business Services Limited	HR/H&S/EAP	65.15	344.97	410.12
30	17/03/2026	G J Heaman	MOT - Ford Transit		50.00	50.00
31	17/03/2026	Clarity Copiers	Relocation of printer / copier	40.00	200.00	240.00
32	17/03/2026	Peter Lawrence	Mayoral Expenses / mileage		87.34	87.34
33	17/03/2026	Railfuture Limited	(DCC) Grant		2000.00	2,000.00
34	17/03/2026	DVLA	Vehicle Tax - BD70 BWA		347.50	347.50
35	17/03/2026	Mr A Powell Manor Court Speaker	Charitable payment in lieu of expenses		150.00	150.00
				832.90	9,336.04	10,168.94
			Bank Balances at 19/3/2026 - Current	£ 46,923.47		
			Bank Balances at 19/3/2026 - Deposit	£ 10,000.00		
			Bank Balances at 19/3/2026 - 95 Day Account	£ 300,000.00		